



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 9 May 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
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1. Vietnam

Our embassy in Stockholm believes that so far Lord Russell's "tribunal" (the sessions will probably end tomorrow) has gone rather badly. The sessions were poorly organized and have not had a good press.



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The sessions may get wilder these last two days, as the Swedish Government relaxes or ignores the bounds of legal tolerance. The embassy feels nothing short of a "shocking obscenity" could now cause the government to close up the show.

2. South Vietnam

Yesterday the defense minister announced that the army will not appoint any military man as its candidate for president. This gets the generals off the hook of having openly to support either Ky or Thieu, and lessens for the moment the chances of a split in the military establishment.

It also leaves Ky free to declare his candidacy (with civilian backing) without waiting for Thieu to make up his mind. Thieu may also decide to run, however--and then the generals would be hard-pressed not to take sides, at least privately.

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3. Communist China

We believe the recent press reports of large-scale violence are greatly inflated

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As best we can figure it out, the use of such reports is a repeat of a tactic employed earlier in the cultural revolution.

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In the past Peking has circulated lurid stories about disorders in order to discredit local party leaders slated to be purged. Now, however, it looks as if local military commanders rather than party types are the main target.

4. Hungary

Cardinal Mindszenty is debating whether to abandon his refuge in the US Embassy in Budapest. This word comes from Cardinal Koenig of Vienna who saw Mindszenty on Sunday. Koenig believes the Hungarian prelate may accept a papal invitation to come to Rome, or decide to live in Vienna. Our chargé is not so sure.

5. Syria

The radical leadership has been confronted recently by a number of demonstrations reflecting opposition within the business and religious communities. While these people almost certainly cannot topple the regime, we might well see one of the competing factions at the top take advantage of the general unrest to make a move against the others.

6. EEC

EEC Commission President Hallstein has withdrawn his candidacy to head the new commission merging the executives of EEC, EURATOM, and the Coal-Steel Community. He blames his decision on the recent Kiesinger - De Gaulle agreement to limit his tenure to a mere six months.

The French will be glad to see Hallstein go; they have always been opposed to his attempts to strengthen the EEC. By withdrawing, Hallstein at least will stimulate discussion of the issues involved.

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